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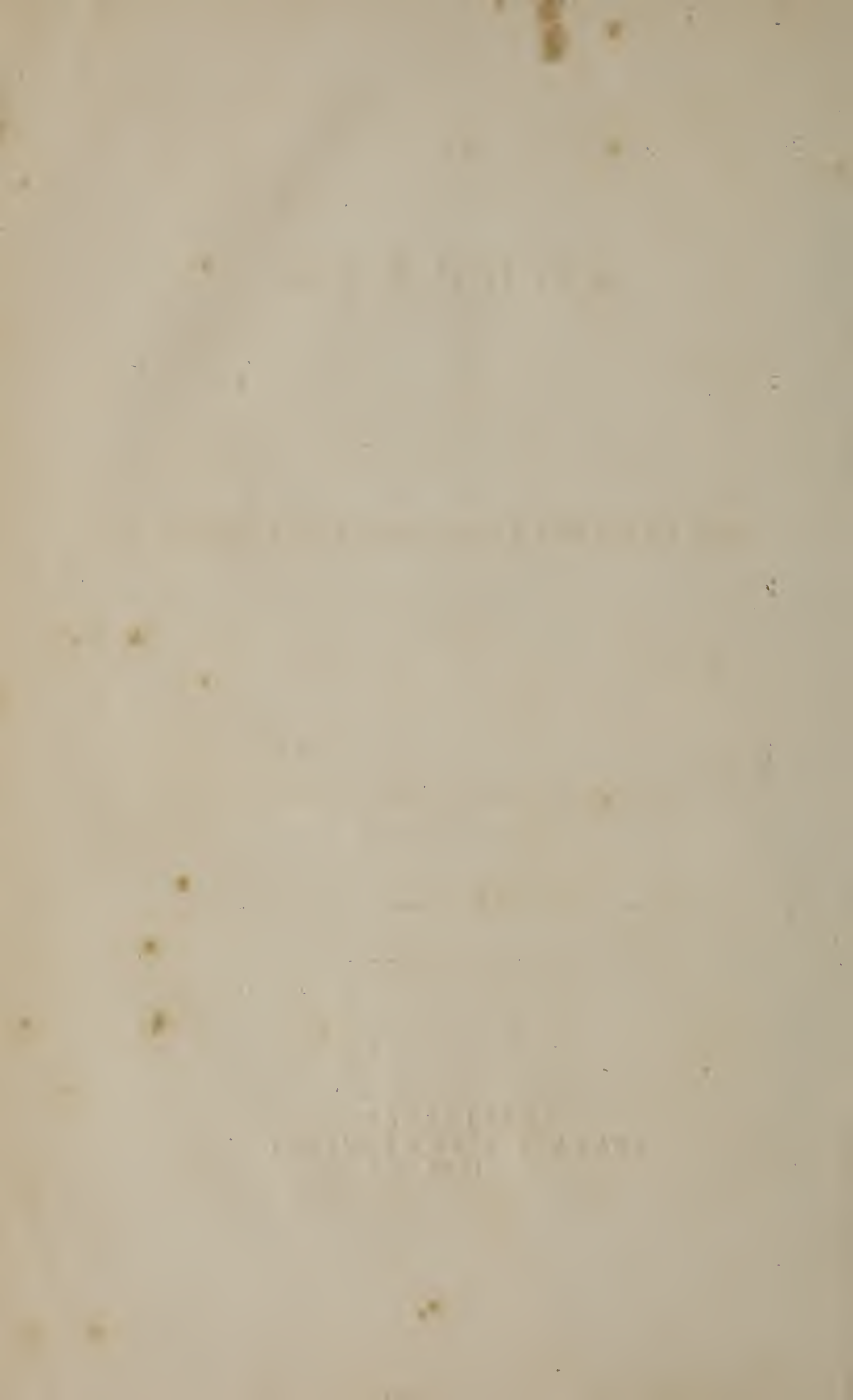
A D D R E S S

TO

THE INHABITANTS OF NANTUCKET,

ON

EDUCATION AND FREE SCHOOLS.



A D D R E S S.

FELLOW CITIZENS—

At a Convention held in this place on the 14th of October last, by request of the Secretary of the Board of Education, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to address you on the subject of Education and Free Schools.

The authority by which we are delegated, and the subject on which we speak, it is hoped, will secure your attention for a few moments. The subject concerns every individual in the community, and we hope every one under whose eye this address may come, will give it *one candid* reading. Reader, this we ask of you. We speak in behalf of your children—of posterity—of the valued institutions of our land. And by the interest you feel in all these, we entreat you, give us one half hour's attention.—Our subject is education—education especially as connected with common schools. Whatever value may be attached to other and higher seminaries, (and we are not disposed to undervalue them,) it is believed, that for nineteen-twentieths of their education, other than that which grows out of the parental relation, our children—our country, must depend for a series of years to come, on the *common Schools*. To these we must look for the chief influence, which education may have in promoting public virtue, in maintaining peace and tranquillity, and in perpetuating our republican institutions and civil liberty. Every patriot, every friend of virtue and well regulated society, must, therefore, be the friend of education, and of the system of free schools.

But what do we mean by education and free schools? No term in our language has been more abused and misapplied than that of *education*. “By a great majority of persons it is considered as consisting merely in the acquisition of pronunciation, spelling and grammar; writing, casting accounts, and the lan-

guages: and these acquisitions are thought of value, chiefly as they prepare the individual for certain secular employments, and are instrumental in procuring his subsistence."* But this is a very meagre definition of education; your children may have all this, and be very poorly *educated*. It embraces hardly more than one-third what the term means. Education is the exercising of all man's powers—physical, intellectual and moral. It is the *drawing out* of them all in their just harmony and proportion.—It regards the material frame, by which the mind manifests its own operations. It is the formation of character—the discipline of the intellect—the building up of moral principle and moral power. Its aim should be, to enable man to know, to do, to enjoy, and to be, all that his Creator intended he should know, and do, enjoy, and be. The more nearly it approaches this point, the more nearly it will have fulfilled its appropriate office: and when it shall have *reached* this goal, man will stand forth again as at first, the proper image of his Maker.

By free schools we mean schools provided by law for all the children of the community at the public expense, each man paying in proportion to his property. And *good* free schools are seminaries in which ample provision is made for the education of all the children of a community in the sense above explained.—We know this definition of education differs widely from its ordinary acceptance; but were we requested to strike out any part, we should be at a loss where to begin.

We say education—education of the rising generation—education as connected with schools, claims a deep interest in the bosom of every parent and citizen. It is, if any thing is, important to the individual, as affecting his happiness, respect, prosperity, usefulness, and every interest in life. What is your child without education? Place him in your mind's eye in the midst of life with its thousand temptations and triumphs—victories and defeats; with its ten thousand means of usefulness and enjoyments, and contrast him with what he might have been, had he passed under the plastic hand of education! It is important to the community, as the palladium of our rights and liberties—securing public order and peace—strengthening and perpetuating our civil institutions—doubling the value of all our other bles-

* Lecture on Public Instruction, by George S. Hillard.

sings, and adding a thousand of its own. Must not the true patriot be the friend of education and free schools?

If such is the object and such the power of education, it should be regarded as the proper business—the great end of life, rather than as a *means* to something higher and better. It should fill a large place in the eye of the patriot, the code of the legislator, and the heart of the parent; from neither of whom has it yet received one half its proper consideration. Prevailing views of education are too low and narrow. They savor too much of the earthly, material and gainful; and too little of the spiritual, heavenly and divine. Like most schemes of human ambition and pursuit, they are directed too much to present convenience and worldly gain. With parents the education of children should be matter of deep and daily solicitude—of constant endeavor. With many, however, we apprehend, it is not rightly regarded; or has it ever assumed its relative importance. We would remove false views; we would set this matter in its true light.

When parents, as they sometimes do, detain children from school to fill up a gap suddenly made in the ranks either of indoors or out-doors operatives—to perform a service of no great importance, or which might have been done at another time, or by another person; or that matters of pecuniary interest, or the claims of fashion or pleasure may not suffer, we must believe, that education does not hold its proper place in their esteem; that it is too much an affair of parents' interest and convenience, and not enough of duty and benevolence. They forget, or they have never known, that they hold children in trust; that they hold in their hands the future destinies of the little ones around them. There ought to be more self-denial, and conscientiousness and spirituality in this business; more giving up of present convenience and immediate gain for the future real good of children. The inquiry with parents should always be—'What *ought* we to do, what *can* we do for our children;—not 'what will suit our convenience or our interest.' What does their future welfare demand at our hands? Let parents look at the subject in this light. Again, parents are prone to make a low estimate of their own abilities, the reason for thinking they can do nothing in the education of their children, especially in directing

their school education. This is their apology for neglecting the most important of all parental duties. With all parents there rests an incalculable responsibility in regard to this subject. We believe they *can* do much, and have much to do in the education of their children, even in directing and forwarding their school education. It is time parents knew, and felt it too, that they are, without their own choice, their children's educators; their own house is a school-room. Every day under their own roof, by their own fire-side, at their own table, and under their own eye, this work is going on. Their own actions, words, feelings, habits and customs, are silently, but surely and permanently, enstamping themselves upon the characters, and shaping the destinies of their children. 'What manner of persons ought ye then to be in all holy conversation and godliness'! Twenty years will develop the character you are now forming. The day will reveal it, either to their honor and glory, or to their shame and ruin. It is for you, parents, to say whether your children shall be useful, respected, and happy, or worthless and wretched. And we believe it is very possible for parents, who know nothing of algebra, grammar, or arithmetic, to be of great use in the school-education of their children. They can do much, very much, in deciding the point, whether *school* shall be valuable or otherwise to their children—pleasant and attractive, or dull and irksome—hated and avoided, or loved and sought after; whether a child shall feel a deep interest in his studies, or loathe and abhor them. Do they ask how? We reply, talk to your child about his school; inquire of him daily about his lessons and progress; encourage and cheer him in his studies; furnish him with books and every needed facility; send him constantly and seasonably to school; speak well of his teacher; inspire into your child the sentiment of love and respect for him, and let it appear that you sympathise with him in his labors and trials, and are ready to afford him every aid to success in his arduous undertaking. You cannot do a worse thing for your child, than to betray a want of confidence or respect towards his teacher. Frequently visit the school. You can give no better demonstration of your interest in its welfare: attend examinations.—Let no parent plead ignorance, or want of time, or inability, as a reason for neglecting these things. This is rarely the true cause.

What if your children hear you plead want of time for not visiting the school! They see you have time for every thing else, for business and fashion, and ceremony and pleasure. Think you they cannot read, and reading, understand? Be not deceived. What *you* so lightly esteem, your children will not be very likely highly to value.

There may be, who think, that the support of schools, is not a proper subject for legislation and taxation; and can feel no interest in sustaining a system, how useful soever, founded on principles radically unjust. On this point we would bestow a passing remark. The lines of demarcation between subjects which are suitable for legislation and taxation, and those which are not, are not very definitely drawn. In general, all matters of decided public utility, fall within the appropriate sphere of legislation. And what has more to do with our social interests,—the public good, than the education of the rising generation? What subject is more worthy the attention of Legislators, Judges, and supervisors of our public interests? The history of crime, will show an intimate connexion between ignorance and vice; between those who have been left uneducated, and those who have found their portion among outlaws and felons. This is not a random assertion, introduced for a rhetorical effect. It can be sustained by the record of our courts and penitentiaries. A great portion of those consigned to the cells of the latter, are found unable to write or read.* Among what class do we look for the materials of riots and mobs? Let the history of almost any popular outrage,—the disgraceful scenes, which have been recently enacted in some of our populous towns and cities, answer; among those farthest removed from the salutary restraints of education. Knowledge is power, and moral cultivation is power of the highest and best kind. It is power which will serve the individual in the hour of temptation. It is power which will sustain the political fabric, when in spite of all other defence, it might fall a victim to lawless ambition, and popular frenzy. “The design of education, especially of education in public schools, is to act upon the whole community,—to raise up whole classes of men,—to make every person in the *body politic* fit for his privileges and his place—to prevent crime,—to secure peace,—and to multiply and exalt the enjoyment of each and every member in it.

* See note at the end.

Provision for public instruction, is the unquestionable interest and duty of every wise government ; for the primary object of all governments should be to increase the happiness of the people. And the highest quality of human happiness, is that derived from exalting the intellect, and purifying the heart ; to the end, that men may aim at objects worthy of their ambition, and their social intercourse be regulated with all the satisfaction of mutual love, honor and trust.”* On this subject one of our most eloquent orators, as well as soundest statesman, has thus expressed himself, “ For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in proportion to his property. And we look not to the question, whether he himself has, or has not children. We regard it as a wise and liberal policy, by which property and life, and the peace of society are secured. By general instruction, we seek so far as possible, to purify the moral atmosphere, to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for security beyond the law, and above the law, in the prevalence of enlightened and well principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue and prolong the time, when in the villages and farm-houses of New England, there may be undisturbed sleep with unbarred doors. We confidently trust that by the diffusion of general knowledge and good sentiments, the political fabric may be secure ; as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness. We rejoice that every man in the community may call all property his own, so far as he has occasion for it to furnish for himself and his children, the blessings of religious instruction and the elements of knowledge. This celestial and this earthly light he is entitled to by the fundamental laws. It is every poor man’s undoubted birth-right. It is the great blessing which the Constitution has guarantied to him ; it is his solace in life, and it may be his consolation in death, that his country stands pledged by the faith which it has plighted to all its citizens, to protect his children from ignorance, barbarity and vice.”

We will now ask your attention to what legislation has done in our own State for education and free schools. “ In every town containing five hundred families or householders, there shall

* Public Instruction.

be kept by teachers of competent ability and good character, two schools for twelve months each, for the instruction of children in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic and good behavior; and besides, a school kept by a master of competent ability and good morals, who shall in addition to the branches before mentioned, give instruction in the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry and algebra,—ten months in a year; and if the town contains four thousand inhabitants, the said master shall, in addition to all the branches before required, be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, general history, rhetoric and logic. Such are the statute regulations for the establishment of common schools in large towns; and such they have been substantially for years.—So far as they go, we deem them wise and good;—and wish every freeholder in the county were ready to say, “The time is *fully come*, when they shall be carried into *complete effect*.” It may not be wise to inquire, whose is the fault, that these wholesome laws so long remained to us a dead letter in the statute book, without a single effort to put them in force; or to impute blame to any class of citizens, that we are now withholding from the rising generation important privileges which the Legislature has granted them: nor will we deny that our schools may honorably compare in their standing with those in other portions of the Commonwealth. We may be ready to allow to them, and to those who have been engaged in their superintendence and instruction, all that their warmest friends would claim, and we profess to be among the number of such, yet it is too obvious to require illustration or argument, that our schools in their character and kind neither meet the demands of the law, nor the wants of the community. Were it admitted that our schools are in advance of all others in the State, still so long as they come not up to the law, nor meet the wants of the rising generation in affording them all proper facilities for acquiring a sound and thorough education, they are not what they should be. “Let us not,” said one, on whose eloquence we all hang with enrapturing delight, and for whose judgment we cherish the highest respect, “let us not inquire how much better we may be than our neighbors, but let the inquiry be, how near to the goal of *perfection* have we come?”

Whatever sin there may be in having started so late in the course, there would be much greater in adhering to manifest and

acknowledged imperfections and deficiencies, and remaining satisfied with any thing short of the highest attainable excellence. Parents, citizens, you are the proper supervisors of the rising generation. You are in an important sense the framers of their characters. You hold in trust their future destinies. You admit that schools, in which children are to be trained for future life, are a proper subject of social supervision and public charge. We solemnly ask, how are you fulfilling your duty? As it becomes parents, patriots, philanthropists? As lovers of good order and public tranquility? As those who have deeply at heart the best interests of the rising generation, the permanency and prosperity of our institutions? Have you done, are you doing, all that an enlightened philanthropy and genuine patriotism, not to say a holy religion, requires? Have you given to this subject all that consideration, which its bearing on the best interests of individuals and of society fairly give it a claim? Have not interests of vastly inferior moment a higher place in your esteem, and are they not *more* the object of your aspiration and effort? You have some knowledge of the standing and character of our schools;—what facilities they hold out to the young for acquiring a thorough education. On the most liberal interpretation, they cannot be regarded as a fulfilment of the law. You have no *classic school*; you have no place in which your children can make themselves acquainted with ancient literature in the original languages. This advantage they must seek in private seminaries, and at their own expense. They have a legal as well as a moral claim upon you. Shall it not be answered? Shall not this reproach be wiped away? Has not the time fully come, when you will say, “All that the law requires, that will we do?” While in many parts of this Commonwealth, so long famed for attention to education, *voluntary* contribution has outstripped the enactments of law, shall it be said of Nantucket alone, that the people, in a cause which has so many claims upon their liberality, do not come up to the scanty provisions of the law? Shall it be true, that we so lightly esteem our children,—that we know so little of the value of knowledge,—of an enlightened understanding and an improved heart;—that we are so little awake to the progress of light,—to the claims of country and posterity? What does the statute require that is not wholesome and good? You may doubt in regard to the utility of the ancient languages.

We have not space to go into a labored defence and illustration of it. We will only say that, besides affording a most excellent exercise to the faculties of the learner, particularly his *comparison* and *reflection*, and increased facilities for understanding the history and character of a people, Latin and Greek once embodied all the learning of the world; they have liberally contributed to the formation of our own tongue. From their rich treasures, modern science, in every department, has drawn copiously in the formation of her vocabulary. The Latin makes the basis of several of the languages of modern Europe, which are rich in every branch of human learning; and they have both received the marked attention of learned men in every age. In view of such facts will you longer withhold from the young aspirant after knowledge among your children, all facilities for making these sources of learning contribute to his aid? Did the English language now hold exclusive possession of all the literature in the world, would not the thought of its ever ceasing to be a living tongue,—of all interest in its knowledge having died away, and the very means of obtaining it being withheld from the young, be a painful one? A period when this shall have become a reality, we can hardly separate in our minds from a return of the *ages of darkness*.

One person may say, “*I* have done without Latin and Greek, so may my children.” Is this philosophy—is it reason? You have done without Chemistry, Algebra, and Natural Philosophy; but may not your children be benefited by these sciences? If you deny it, consistency would require that you withhold from your children every advantage which their fathers did not enjoy, and thus close the way to all improvement. Another can see no *use* in these languages, and why meet the expense of teaching them? We reply, some of the advantages have already been adverted to, and even if you can see no utility, is it not very possible there may be advantages which have escaped your observation, or which you cannot fully appreciate? Is not this true of many inventions and sciences, of which nevertheless you think favorably, and which were not so much as named among school studies in the days of your pupilage? A third may object, “*I* have no son to send to College, or child that *I* wish to learn Latin and Greek; let those who have, pay for such instruction if they want it.” This may seem very conclusive, but it is very

fallacious reasoning. It is not very many years since the introduction of English Grammar into our schools was objected to on the same ground. And indeed, if the objection is valid against the languages, it is valid against Algebra, Geography, or any other branch, and even against schools themselves. We have no children to send to school, we wish for no school; let those who want them, pay for them! But we have attempted to show that this is neither patriotic, benevolent, nor right. You cannot live in society and do any thing for education, without benefiting yourself. You have no children to be benefited by a knowledge of Latin and Greek, but your neighbor has, and in the hour of your greatest need, such knowledge might enable them to render you, or society, or your country, a service which all other attainments would be wholly inadequate to afford. But independent of Latin and Greek, the wants of this community demand, and loudly demand, a public school of higher character than any now existing among us;—a school, in which the older and more advanced pupils may be collected, and receive attention and aid in the higher departments of English studies, which it is impossible for them to enjoy in the ordinary Grammar school. There are scholars enough already prepared to step in and fill up such a seminary, whenever it shall be opened. This is what the community owes them; and so long as they are kept out of it, they are robbed of their due. Parents, how long will you do them this wrong? How long will you deny them their rights? We do not hesitate to say, that the rising generation—yea, that this whole community, are suffering materially and continually for the want of such an establishment.

One of the most beautiful and attractive features of the statute, is the very prominent place it gives to the moral qualifications of teachers and the importance of moral instruction. It cannot have failed to arrest the attention and command the admiration of every reader. “It shall be the duty of all instructors of youth to exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice and a sacred regard to the truth, love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornaments of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded; and it shall be the

duty of such instructors to lead their pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the abovementioned virtues to preserve and perpetuate a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness; and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices." And again, "The school committee shall require full and satisfactory evidence of the good character of all instructors; and shall ascertain by personal examination their literary qualifications and capacity for the government of schools." Such is the language of the statute, and who will withhold from it his hearty approbation? The *moral* powers of man are his glory. They ally him to natures angelic. And how can that education be regarded as complete, which passes over the moral sentiments? These, like the physical and intellectual faculties, can be perfected and made to answer their full purpose, only by training and exercise. What an anomaly is that school in which moral cultivation finds no place! We have defended schools on the ground of public and private *utility*—as the palladium of social virtue and civil liberty. Now the prosperity of a community is far more dependent on sound moral sentiment than a high state of intellectual refinement.—Nothing is more true than that men may be great and learned, without being good and useful. Men of high intellectual endowment, but destitute of moral principle, are far from being the best materials to compose society. We want great men, we want learned men, but we more want *good* men. On these must the community rely to carry forward the great work of human benevolence and improvement—men of sound sense and sound principles. It is not to the few, who are endowed with brilliant talents, and dazzle with their splendor, or scorch with their heat, but to the greater number, though quite too small, who shine with a bright and equable light, which always points in the path of truth, and is ever shedding a benign influence on the world, to whose wisdom and philanthropy we owe the great blessings of society. So reads the history of human enterprise and benevolence. Such men should be reared in our schools; at least *there*, and at the domestic altar and fire-side, should the elements of such a character be arranged. On such men must we rely for the promotion and perpetuity of private happiness and public security. The history of nations tells us, that though it is not al-

ways the stern and self-denying virtues which raise a people to glory, it is corruption and wickedness which bring them to shame and ruin. And how often has individual genius, that seemed angel-like in the loftiness of its aspirations, bowed before mean temptations, which a little timely discipline would have enabled it to withstand! Our own nation, though young, has more than once been seen to tremble on the verge of ruin; but it is worthy of remark, that such a crisis in no instance has been the result of *ignorance*, but of the destitution of moral principle. If our Union and liberties ever make shipwreck, this is the rock on which they will split. We shall always have enough *great* men; the only danger is, that there will not be enough *good* men—men of disciplined passions, pure principles, nice moral discrimination and active benevolence. It is for the want of such men to lead in a community, that mobs and riots and Lynchings have disgraced our land. A cultivated intellect cast upon society uncontrolled and unsanctified by moral sentiments, is but the scattering of arrows, fire-brands and death. Therefore the education of *the moral sentiments* should be a primary object with all who have any thing to do with instruction. If children are taught but *one* thing, whether at home or at school, let it be their *duty*. Let it be love of truth, sobriety, temperance, order, justice and humanity. If you make them any thing, make them *good*.—With sound principles and good morals, are intimately connected correct manners. It is believed this subject has held quite too low a place both in school and domestic education. It is not an uncommon opinion, that school is the place to teach *science*, not *morality*; polite literature, not good behavior. It is probably in deference to this sentiment in connexion with the apprehension of sectarian influence, that instruction in the great principles of human duty, as set forth in the precepts of the Gospel, has been well nigh excluded from our schools. By a standing regulation, the only exercise properly of this character, is the daily reading of a portion of the sacred scriptures without note or comment.—This, we think, is not quite as it should be. Will not a liberal and enlightened public sentiment, permit, yea demand, something more? And shall not teachers, as the statute requires, be examined in regard both to their willingness and competency, to instruct in the great principles of morality and piety, as well as in grammar and arithmetic? In a christian community, it

is presumed none would think of any other system of morals, than that contained in the New Testament. And notwithstanding the diversity of theories which have been built up on minor points of difference, there is much ground in that book common to all. All, who admit the divine authority of the scriptures, believe in the infinite and paternal character of God, his moral government, man's accountability, the necessity of holiness, and the mediation of a Saviour. And, we trust, all would be pleased, that the great truths of practical godliness which regulate the intercourse of man with man, should be enforced by these cardinal doctrines of christianity. When children are exhorted to be sober, to speak the truth, to swear not at all, to love one another, the teacher may be permitted to deepen the impression by adding: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good;" and "God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." In school-education, we utterly deprecate every thing properly sectarian. Let it be entirely and forever excluded. Let the first indication of such a spirit be effectually and promptly met by indignant rebuke. But the mere *apprehension* of false doctrine or wrong bias—the bare possibility of this, should not be regarded a sufficient reason for neglecting the moral sentiments, and excluding from our schools christian instruction. Would not every parent of devout mind, prefer that his child should be educated in the great principles of right feeling and right action as recognised in the teachings of Jesus Christ, to his growing up and going into the world without any distinct notions of sin and holiness, of his own accountability, of God and eternity?

We are persuaded parents and educators do not think half enough of this matter—of their own responsibility and the influence of education. If we would prevent crime, murder, theft, and debauchery—if we would clear our penitentiaries and prisons of their inmates—if we would put an end to riots and mobs and the workings of an incendiary spirit, we must teach our children to fear God and work righteousness. We must take up the business not only single-handed, but in families, in schools, and by whole communities. In thousands of instances we educate the young to vice, or rather we leave them to grow up without education, and when they arrive at manhood, we punish them for being wicked—for being just what a neglectful, culpable com-

munity has made them. It is time people had a juster apprehension of their duty, and were aroused to a more faithful performance of it. Not to mention feats of villany of deeper dye and more desperate daring, it is time our streets were cleansed of some of their profaneness and vulgarity; that stricter purity of manners and propriety of conduct did more generally characterize our youth; that our public squares and places of resort were less frequently than they are, the scenes of noisy, rude and vulgar mirth, to the no small annoyance not only of the sick and infirm, but of the sober, industrious and orderly. It is time that parents looked to this matter. It is time that public sentiment was set right and brought to exert a restraining influence on such irregularities, and our police were encouraged and sustained in a more faithful discharge of their duty.

In Prussia, where we may look for a model of almost every thing excellent in the school-system, every child is instructed as much in moral duty as in arithmetic and grammar. And in our own schools, if classes were regularly formed in such works as Madison's *Self-knowledge*, Abercrombie's *Moral Sentiments*, Sullivan's *Moral Class-book*, Gallaudet's *Theology*, or the *New Testament*, it would constitute one of their most beautiful features and valuable recommendations. It is a fact which does not speak to our praise, that almost every Class-book adopted into our schools, is prepared to teach how to read, or get, or calculate;—to teach mere science; as though these were the great objects of life. Let something more be put into the hands of children to teach than how to *feel*, to *act*, to *live*. Books should be more a great deal adapted, and instruction more directed, to the inculcation of *moral* sentiment—to explaining moral obligation, and illustrating the connection between morality and individual peace and public prosperity. Thus carrying out the provisions of the statute, “It shall be the duty of teachers to endeavor to lead their pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the abovementioned virtues, to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness; and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.”

Other studies might be introduced into our schools, and other changes affecting their operation and management, for which the

public mind should be prepared. We can do little more than mention two or three. Physiology, apparatus for visible illustrations, particularly in Astronomy and the various branches of Natural Philosophy, Apparatus for Gymnastic exercises, and school libraries.

Health stands among the first of blessings. Children would do well to learn something of the structure, laws and economy of their own material frame; what food, habits, attitudes, exercises and modes of living, are consistent with, opposed to, or promotive of health. Physiology should be one of their class-studies. Very suitable works for this purpose are found in the recent publications of Messrs. George and Andrew Combe. What an incalculable benefit might thus be rendered to children by making them early the intelligent guardians of a trust, to them of inestimable value! Would it not be doing them quite as great a service to demonstrate the natural consequences of over-action, tight lacing, exposure, excess or licentiousness; to teach them what is healthy attitude and healthy diet; how they may avoid a headache, a fever, or a consumption, as to teach them the solution of a difficult problem in Algebra, or keep them eternally casting per centage? And as connected with the subject of health, as well as for the reason of affording to children the means of suitable amusement and exercise, every school should be furnished with some simple apparatus for gymnastic purposes. Such provision might, indeed, be made auxiliary to good manners and morals as well as to sound health. It would hold out for the school one more point of attraction, and multiply the chances of agreeable associations in the minds of children. Amusements for children should be safe, healthful and innocent. Many, which they now practise, have neither of these qualities to recommend them; they are neither healthful, safe nor innocent.— Let some simple apparatus be constructed, which shall be adapted to all these purposes. Object not to the expense. For what more worthy object can you pay your money, than to make your children healthy, wise and good?

Were there not danger of extending these remarks to an unreasonable length, we might notice every point affecting education and schools. But many topics we must pass altogether, and others notice very briefly. On the utility of Apparatus for visible

illustration, and of school libraries, it seems unnecessary to dilate, so generally is it admitted. For visible illustration by means of good apparatus, nothing can be a substitute in Astronomy and the various branches of Natural Philosophy. The same mode of teaching might be successfully applied to geography, civil history, and biography. Let every school be furnished with a few sets of engravings in each of these departments of learning. The history of our own country and of the great men who have adorned it, might be taught in this way much more effectually than in the ordinary mode. Scholars would be more interested; they would understand more and remember more.

Libraries might be so made up, as to subserve the three-fold purpose of books of instruction and entertainment to awaken and gratify the curiosity of the scholars; works of reference to aid teachers, and sets of class-books of various kinds for reading.—These would be an invaluable acquisition to schools; and for this purpose the Legislature enacted, last year, that districts might assess themselves annually to the amount of twenty dollars.

A word on School Committees. By the statute, much is entrusted to their disposal. Of course, the character of the schools must, for the time, depend much upon the character of their supervisors. They procure the teachers, examine the schools, decide on the books, the number and character of the scholars, the order and kind of studies. Such then as are the *Committee*, such must be the *school*. Surely, then, the choice of this Committee involves no ordinary responsibility. Fellow citizens, have you duly weighed this point? In how great a degree is put into the hands of these men, the fate of your country, your property, your children, yourselves! They should be good men and true. In the choice of men to an office so responsible, high, and holy, the only inquiry should be, are they upright,—are they competent? It should never be asked what is their standing, calling, sect, or party? They should be upright, reputable men, interested in the subject of Education. But all this is not enough. They must be *competent*. A man may be a good farmer, mechanic, merchant, or navigator, and even move high in professional career, who, after all, might make a very indifferent judge of the condition of a school, or the qualifications of a teacher. With all other qualifications, the school committee should be able to say, and say promptly, what a teacher should *do* and what a school should *be*.

They are to decide on the course of studies, books, apparatus, &c. It is obvious, that such men should be familiar with the whole subject of *elementary education*, especially with the recently improved books adapted thereunto. Such an acquaintance is hardly to be expected from men, even *worthy* men, in *all* the walks of life. And here, lest our motives should be mistaken, we would add, that what we have said on the subject of qualifications, has been offered without meaning to intimate what school committees *have* been, or have *not* been; what they *have* done, or have *not* done. We speak of what schools and committees and teachers should be. And we say again, fellow-citizens, look to this matter. Whatever public institutions, or interests, or duties, you may neglect, neglect not *this*; neglect not the public schools. Interest yourselves in them. Let children and teachers, and committees, understand that they are thought of, and looked after. Convince your children of it in every way you can. Inquire about their lessons,—their school. Go to it. Visit it often. Where can you spend ten minutes to more advantage? Let the school room be often cheered and encouraged by your presence. Every moment you spend there, you may set down as a contribution to the cause of education,—to the interests of your country, and of humanity. See that your children punctually, and constantly attend school. Do you say it is not always convenient? We ask, convenient for *whom*? for yourselves, or for your children? If for yourselves, you are making the *right*—the dearest *interest* of your children, given you in trust, succumb to your *convenience*. Is that kind,—is it right? Answer this question.

The arduous and varied duties of school committees, cannot be discharged with fidelity, without much expense of time and labor. It calls for a sacrifice of personal ease and private interest, which few can make as a gratuitous offering. Let them, then, receive a suitable compensation. We see no reason why legislators, and judges, and other public officers, should be paid for their services, which does not apply with equal force to the supervisors of schools and education. For no worthier object could money be appropriated. Let them receive a compensation, and, then exact of them a service corresponding to the claims of their high commission. In all the Prussian schools, where we may look for a model of almost every thing *good*, every officer is *well paid*.

We have thus far spoken of carrying out the provisions of a wise legislature. But why should we stop here! Legislation in a Republic, is but the formal expression of public sentiment. When the people, want more, legislators will do more. Legislation has done little, in comparison with what it ought to do for education. Why should not the rising generation be regarded as a public trust, and their education be sustained at the public charge? Nothing exerts a greater influence on the character of the present and the coming age; nothing, on public and private virtue and happiness,—nothing, on the prosperity and perpetuity of our institutions. Nothing can better subserve the interests of liberty and the equalization of rights; nothing will better enable the poor and middling interest, to make an effectual stand against the encroachment of power, of wealth and of title; or the friends of order and of law, to frustrate the designs of the intriguing demagogue, or restrain the outbreakings of popular phrenzy, than *sound education*. Here, here, fellow citizens, is the palladium of your liberties,—of all that is valuable in the social fabric. It is not only connected therewith, but constitutes its *very life*. Why should not the public then assume the education of the young? Why should not all the money that is expended for this object, be made a public charge, to be defrayed by a proportionate assessment upon all the citizens? Does not an enlightened self interest, as well as a sound and liberal policy, demand it? Why should not the public schools be multiplied in number, and elevated in character, until provision is made in them for the education of every child, equal to what is now found in our best private seminaries? This is what shuld be done, and *must* be done, before the fathers will have discharged their obligation to the children. This would, unquestionably, be best for the poor and middling classes, and whenever they are prepared for it, it will be done. And why would it not be best for the rich, and those who have no children? The next generation should come up an improved race; and the property they may leave to their heirs, will have advanced more than sufficient to balance the increased expense. Then every class of citizens, and every individual would feel a direct and immediate interest and concern in the public schools; and these would rise to an elevation of character, which has yet hardly been reached by our best private establishments. Our children would be educated together, without distinction of

rank ; and this, if it has no other recommendation, would certainly better comport with our republican habits and institutions.

From forty-five to fifty scholars, is a number large enough for one teacher. On this island there are about eighteen hundred children of school age. To carry out this plan, would require from forty-five to fifty teachers, fifteen infant schools, eight primary, five grammar, and three high schools ; and an annual appropriation of one-half or five-eighths per cent. on the whole property of the Island. There are now expended by the inhabitants for education in public and private schools of every kind, about twelve thousand dollars annually. The plan suggested would require from eight thousand to ten thousand dollars more, but children would be much more uniformly, and better educated ; yes, better than even the best on the present plan. The expense would fall much more equally, and in a greater degree on those who are able to bear it.* And why should not such a plan every where go into operation ? The poor and middling interest surely will not object, and the rich ought not. Our schools must for every reason be better ; and the advantages of education in an incomparably higher degree be secured. Teachers will be better paid, and this class of professional men must rise in character. The amount of interest in public schools would be immeasurably increased ; for how can parents feel the highest interest in schools, where they have no children, and where, it may be, they think they ought to have none, until the character of such schools is greatly changed ? It is unreasonable, impossible. And that it would better comport with the genius of republicanism, there can be no doubt. If the children of the affluent go to one school, and the children of mechanics and the poor to another, will not the tendency be to keep up a distinction of ranks in society ?

There are one or two other topics, to which we will allude briefly, and then bring these remarks to a close.

To have good schools, we must have good *teachers*,—teachers of the right temper and disposition, and of the proper scholastic attainments. In Prussia they have a saying, “ as is the teacher, so is the school,” so intimately blended, do they regard the prosperi-

* If the object is to *educate the whole* of the community, there is no plan so economical and easy to the *poor and middling classes* of society as the one above proposed. This point admits of numerical demonstration. Suppose a man worth \$5000, has four children to educate. The annual expense at good private seminaries at \$4 to \$7 per quarter for each child, would amount to \$64 to \$112. His annual school tax to carry out the plan proposed, would be only \$25 to \$30. Here would be a saving every year of \$30 to \$70. This plan, it is true, makes a large tax ; but it must be remembered that this tax covers the whole expense for *schooling*, and that too, in seminaries of a character equally elevated with our *best high schools*.

ty of the school, and the qualifications of the teacher. We have legally established schools; and we want teachers—well qualified teachers. Where shall we get them? *How* and *where* shall they be qualified? Our legislators have done nothing in regard to this matter. The public have not with united voice called upon them and bid them act; nothing has been done for this invaluable class of men,—a class on which all other classes, professions and interests, so much depend to facilitate preparation for their arduous and important task. Would it be any thing more than a consistent carrying out and completion of the school system already begun; yea, would it exceed the limits of a judicious economy, to appropriate funds for establishing seminaries, in which teachers themselves may be taught *how to teach*. Where are they, who are to be the teachers of all others, themselves to learn? If seminaries of this kind were established in various parts of the Commonwealth, under the supervision of a Board of Directors of enlarged powers, they would in a few years, furnish an ample supply of competent teachers. The Faculty of such seminaries, in connexion with a committee from the Board of Education, might be empowered to give certificates of qualifications, or diplomas, to deserving graduates, which would be better evidence of qualification to school committees, than could be obtained by any personal examination; and a sufficient passport to the superintendence of any school. This it seems to us, more than any thing, our schools need; and this the community should demand. Why not send up a memorial on this subject to our next legislature? Let the whole country speak with united voice.

There is another service, which seminaries of this kind in connexion with the Board of Education, might render to the cause of education. Their influence and authority might lead to the selection and general adoption of a better set of Class Books, from the great diversity which have found their way into our schools, to the great annoyance of parents, teachers, and children,—and no small hindrance to the cause of learning. This has long been felt as a very serious evil, and calls loudly for relief. But it is a relief, which, it is no reflection upon the character or intelligence of school committees in general, to say, we cannot expect from them, with whom the *law* has left the decision, what books shall be used in schools. It implies a minute acquaintance with a certain department of knowledge, which they cannot be supposed to possess.

We cannot close these remarks, without adverting to one or two evils, which have been so long tolerated in our schools, as a means of awakening the interest of pupils, and quickening their progress in learning. We refer to the practice of appealing to the principle of *emulation*, and awarding *premiums*. We, of course, use emulation, in the common acceptation of the term, as implying a desire of pre-eminence over rivals. In the sense of imitation, imitation of the illustrious living, or the illustrious dead, there can be no objection to it. Whatever advantage may be gained to learning from resorting to this principle, is more than counterbalanced by its decidedly bad moral tendency. It is calling into action a principle, exceedingly liable to abuse, and to the abuse of which may be ascribed no small share of the miseries of human life. It is early laying the foundation of alienations, animosities, and heart-burnings, which will survive every thing but death. It is the accursed love of power,—the everlasting scrambling for the high places,—and desire to be in advance of our fellows, that keeps the world in commotion ; and yet we cherish this principle—we infuse it into the young bosom—we set it at work in the hearts of our children, while they are yet in school ! It may subserve the purpose of learning, but not of humanity. If we call it into action, we do it at a tremendous hazard.

Nor is the practice of awarding premiums hardly less objectionable. It is an appeal to the acquisitiveness or cupidity of our natures ; a principle, of whose powerful and active influence we have many sad and affecting examples. And worst of all, do we deem premiums in the form of money. Learning, knowledge, truth, has its own claims and attractions, which the child should be taught to regard as superior to all others. On these, and these alone, should the educator rely for recommending it to the attention of the young. Let these continually be held up to their admiration,—let them gaze upon its beauty, loveliness, and value, until enamoured of its worth, they shall go forth and embrace it with the whole soul. If these fail, nothing can be effective. Let us do nothing to make our children believe that money is better than wisdom.

Fellow citizens, we have done. It is too much to expect that you have gone with us in all our views ; though we have presented nothing but what we believe is based on reason and fact. But do we agree in regard to the main thing ? Do we

agree on the importance of education itself, and of public schools as a means of promoting it? If so, though you cannot go with us in the full extent of our statements, yet do you not admit that there is much for us to do in this noble cause—a cause which is the foundation of success in every laudable enterprise. Does not religion, patriotism, humanity, demand it? Come then up to this work. Let us move together. As you would cherish our free and valuable institutions;—by the love you bear to country, to children, to posterity, we beseech, we implore you, give us your united and hearty co-operation. Let us put to it our right hand, nor relax our effort, nor grow weary in well doing, until we have obtained our object, and reached the goal of *perfection*.

CYRUS PEIRCE,
JAMES MITCHELL,
HENRY F. EDES,
WM. MITCHELL,
WM. COFFIN.

NANTUCKET, December 15, 1837.

NOTE.—According to statements taken from official reports, more than three-fourths of the convicts in the State Prisons in New York, have either received no education, or a very imperfect one.

The chaplain of the Connecticut State Prison, in his last report to the Legislature, says: “Of all the convicts who have ever been sent to this prison, no one has had a liberal or classical education, or belonged to either of the liberal professions. Almost *one half*, when committed to prison, were unable *to write*, and *one-sixth* were unable *to read*.”

The chaplain of the Auburn Prison, in his last report, says: “Of two hundred and twenty-eight convicts committed last year, fifty-six could read and write only; fifty could read only; and *sixty* could not read.”

The Warden of the new Penitentiary in Philadelphia, says: “Of two hundred and seventeen prisoners received during the year 1835, sixty-nine can read; eighty-five can read and write; sixty-three cannot either read or write. Most of those who can read and write, or read only, do it very indifferently.”

The directors of the Ohio Penitentiary, say “that the whole number of convicts are below mediocrity in point of information; and, indeed, our inquiries and observations have long since fully satisfied us, that not only in *our own* Prison, but in others, which we have visited or inquired after, depraved appetites and corrupt habits, which have led to the commission of crime, are usually found with the ignorant, uninformed, duller part of mankind. Of two hundred and seventy-six, nearly all below mediocrity, one hundred and seventy-five are grossly ignorant, and in point of education scarcely capable of transacting the ordinary business of life.”

The inspectors of the Penitentiary in Upper Canada, say: “Of eighty-two, the whole number of convicts, twenty-seven had inferior education; thirteen were uneducated.”—*State Prison Reports*.

“In Prussia, after the school-system had been in operation fourteen years, the proportion of paupers and criminals had decreased thirty-eight per cent.”—*Cousin's Report*.

